

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2336

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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TAGS: PINS, PFOR, BR, UY, CI, BL, AR, CU

SUBJECT: PRESS INTERVIEWS OF PRESIDENTS BANZER,
BORDABERRY, AND GENERAL PINOCHET

REF: BRASILIA 1849

SUMMARY: PRESIDENTS BANZER OF BOLIVIA, BORDABERRY OF URUGUAY, AND CHIEF OF THE CHILEAN JUNTA PINOCHET EACH MET SEPARATELY WITH THE PRESS DURING HIS VISIT TO BRAZIL. ALL TOOK PAINS TO DENY A RUMOR (REPORTEDLY ARISING FROM MEMBERS OF THE VISITING ARGENTINE PRESS) THAT PINOCHET WISHED TO CREATE AN "ANTI-COMMUNIST AXIS" AMONG CHILE, BOLIVIA, URUGUAY AND BRAZIL. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY CLAIMED THAT URUGUAY WAS WINNING ITS STRUGGLE AGAINST MARXISM AND CONFIRMED AGREEMENT WITH GENERAL PINOCHET TO INCREASE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL TIES BETWEEN URUGUAY AND CHILE.
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PRESIDENT BANZER GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO HIS MEETINGS

WITH PRESIDENT GEISEL AND GENERAL PINOCHET, WHILE GENERAL PINOCHET USED HIS INTERVIEW TO DEFEND AND ESPOUSE THE POLITICS OF THE CHILEAN JUNTA. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY DEVOTED THE GREATER PART OF HIS INTERVIEW TO A DESCRIPTION OF URUGUAY'S BATTLE WITH MARXISM. HE BELIEVED THAT URUGUAY HAD WON THE BATTLE BUT HE HELD THE TUPAMARO THREAT TO BE REAL AND PRESENT. HE INSISTED THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR AN "ANTI-COMMUNIST AXIS" IN LATIN AMERICA AND DENIED THAT THE SUBJECT HAD BEEN RAISED IN MEETINGS WITH PINOCHET AND BANZER. BORDABERRY DENIED RECEIVING BRAZILIAN ARMS FOR USE AGAINST THE TUPAMAROS, BUT ADMITTED THE EXISTENCE OF AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE, NOT ONLY WITH BRAZIL BUT ALSO WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. HE DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF CENSORSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS IN URUGUAY, AND DESCRIBED THE PROCESS AS ONE OF POST-FACTO READING OF CORRESPONDENTS' DESPATCHES, ALLOWING THE GOVERNMENT TO CORRECT A REPORTER'S MISTAKEN IMPRESSIONS. HE CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING WITH PINOCHET FOR A RAPID INCREASE IN ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND CALLED SUCH EXCHANGES A WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MARXISM. ASKED ABOUT MAINTENANCE OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA, BORDABERRY REPLIED THAT URUGUAY RESPECTED THE PRINCIPLES OF NON-INTERVENTION AND SELF-DETERMINATION. AS LONG AS CUBA DID NOT SHOW CLEAR AND SINCERE RESPECT FOR THESE SAME PRINCIPLES, CONDITIONS FOR COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE WOULD NOT EXIST, HE SAID. ASKED ABOUT BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA'S REFERENCE TO BRAZIL AS A "CATALYST" (REFTEL) AND THE POSSIBILITY OF BRAZIL'S BECOMING THE SPOKESMAN FOR LATIN AMERICA, BORDABERRY REPLIED THAT, ALTHOUGH COMMON INTERESTS MUST BE IDENTIFIED AND REGIONAL UNITY SOUGHT, THERE WAS NO NECESSITY FOR A SINGLE SPOKESMAN. THERE MIGHT BE VARIOUS SPOKESMEN ACCORDING TO THE SUBJECT-MATTER TO BE TREATED, HE SAID.

2. PRESIDENT BANZER, IN HIS INTERVIEW, NOTED THAT TWO IMPORTANT STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN DURING HIS VISIT TO BRASILIA; HE HAD REACHED AGREEMENT WITH PRESIDENT GEISEL FOR THE SIGNING OF AN ACCORD ON THE SALE OF NATURAL GAS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BRAZIL, AND HAD MET WITH GENERAL PINOCHET ON THE SUBJECT OF REESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH CHILE ON THE FIRST ITEM, BANZER REVEALED THAT FINAL DETAILS OF THE GAS DEAL WOULD BE SETTLED DURING THE VISIT TO BRAZIL OF A BOLIVIAN DELEGATION WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. BANZER SAID HE WILL THEN INVITE PRESIDENT GEISEL TO A SIGNING CEREMONY AT SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA. APART FROM THE SALE OF GAS, BANZER SAID, HIS DISCUSSIONS INCLUDED THE SUBJECT OF

ESTABLISHING A NUCLEUS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-EAST BOLIVIA. BANZER SAID HIS CONVERSATION WITH GEISEL RESULTED IN AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH CONCRETE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN BOLIVIA AND BRAZIL, RESULTING IN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE ALSO NOTED THAT HIS DISCUSSIONS IN BRASILIA DID NOT AFFECT BOLIVIA'S RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA, STATING THAT BOLIVIA HAD SUFFICIENT GAS RESERVES TO SUPPLY THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH ARGENTIAN AND BRAZIL.

3. ON THE SECOND ITEM, BANZER DECLARED THAT REOPENING OF RELATIONS WITH CHILE WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED UPON A SOLUTION TO THE MARITIME PROBLEM--BOLIVIA ACCESS TO THE SEA. HE SAID THAT HIS MEETING WITH GENERAL PINOCHET HAD BEEN CORDIAL AND THAT BOTH AGREED THAT ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MUST BE RESOLVED ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. BANZER OBSERVED THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WOULD REQUIRE A FUNDAMENTAL STEP, "AND THE MARITIME PROBLEM IS FUNDAMENTAL TO US."

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4. BANZER STATED THAT THE NOTION OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST AXIS HAD NOT BEEN TOUCHED UPON DURING HIS TALK WITH PINOCHET. HE DESCRIBED THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT AS ESSENTIALLY NATIONALIST, REJECTING IDEOLOGIES OF EITHER THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT. HE SAID THAT BOLIVIA SUPPORTS THE RIGHT OF EVERY COUNTRY TO MANAGE ITS OWN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, KEEPING IN MIND THE NECESSITY FOR CONTINENTAL UNITY. BANZER DECLARED THAT BOLIVIA IS PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE CUBA AS SOON AS THE FACTS CONFIRM THAT CUBA HAS CEASED TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. REMEMBERING THE CHE GUEVARA ERA IN BOLIVIA, BANZER SAID THAT CUBA'S INTENTIONS TOWARD HIS COUNTRY HAD NOT CHANGED. HE CLAIMED THAT RECENT DISTURBANCES IN BOLIVIA WERE THE DIRECT RESULT OF A CONGRESS HELD IN CUBA. BANZER DECLARED THAT ORDER AND PEACE HAVE REIGNED IN BOLIVIA FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS; HE SAID THAT CANDIDATES WILL SOON BE CALLED FORWARD FOR ELECTIONS WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF THE NEW

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CONSTITUTION AND THAT HE WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE. IN CLOSING, HE PRAISED THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF GOVERNMENT--PRESS COOPERATION, CLAIMING THAT BY THIS MEANS THE PEOPLE ARE MADE AWARE OF THE REALITY OF THE COUNTRY THROUGH CORRECT INFORMATION.

5. GENERAL PINOCHET IN TURN DENIED ANY INTENTION ON HIS PART TO CREATE AN ANTI-COMMUNIST AXIS IN LATIN AMERICA. HE SAID THAT CHILE HAD NO INTEREST IN FORMING POLITICAL AXES AND THAT THE WORD "AXIS" SEEMED BETTER APPLIED TO RELATIONS BETWEEN CUBA AND MOSCOW. CHILE, HE CONTINUED, DOES NOT EVEN REJECT CONTACTS WITH THE SOCIALIST WORLD; BUT IT DOES REJECT THE INTROMISSION OF SOCIALISM AND MARXISM INTO SOVEREIGN COUNTRIES.

6. PINOCHET DESCRIBED HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BANZER AS INFORMAL AND AS SETTING A GOOD PREDISPOSITION TOWARD CLOSER CONTACTS IN THE FUTURE, BUT HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE MEETING HAD NOT RESULTED IN ANY SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENTS. PINOCHET SAID CHILE'S ECONOMY IS IN A GRAVE CRISIS AFTER THREE YEARS OF MARXISM AND INFLATION RATES OF ONE THOUSAND PERCENT. SOME OF THE PEOPLE CONTINUE UNDER THE MARXIST THRALL, HE SAID, BUT EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE SUPPORT THE JUNTA. THE JUNTA HAD THREE ALTERNATIVES UPON TAKING POWER, HE CONTINUED: THE FIRST WAS TO REMAIN IN POWER FOREVER, WHICH THE CHILEAN PEOPLE WOULD REJECT; THE SECOND WAS TO REMAIN IN POWER LONG ENOUGH TO CLEAN HOUSE, FOLLOWED BY FREE ELECTIONS AND A RETURN TO THE BARRACKS--THIS WAS REJECTED BECAUSE IT WOULD RESULT IN A RETURN TO CHAOS;

THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE, THE ONE CHOSEN, WAS TO BRING ABOUT INITIAL RECOVERY OF THE COUNTRY AND PROMOTE IMMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT. THE JUNTA WOULD NOT RETREAT A SINGLE STEP FROM THIS AIM, PINOCHET SAID; THE JUNTA WORKED IN TERMS OF GOALS, NOT TIME LIMITS. INDUSTRIAL AND MINERAL PRODUCTION IS RISING RAPIDLY, HE SAID, AND THE ECONOMY SHOULD BEGIN TO TAKE OFF IN 1978. THE JUNTA IS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, HE CONTINUED; THE GOVERNMENT IS NEITHER OF THE EXTREME RIGHT NOR EXTREME LEFT, BUT ONE OF CHILEANS FOR CHILEANS. AS AN EXAMPLE, PINOCHET SAID THAT THE PEASANTS ARE NOW, AFTER YEARS OF PROMISES, RECEIVING LAND TITLES. THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE, HE SAID, ARE HAPPY AND GIVE INDIVIDUAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE REGIME, KNOWING THAT LIBERTY NOW EXISTS IN CHILE. ASKED HOW LIBERTY COULD EXIST WITH THE PRISONS FULL OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, PINOCHET REPLIED THAT HE REFERRED TO INDIVIDUAL AND NOT COLLECTIVE LIBERTY, SINCE COLLECTIVE LIBERTIES WERE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY THE MARXISTS TO INFLUENCE THE POPULATION. PINOCHET CLAIMED THAT THE RIGHTIST POLITICAL GROUP FATHERLAND AND LIBERTY WAS DISSOLVED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE REVOLUTION, AND DENIED THAT ITS MEMBERS ARE NOW ADVISERS TO THE JUNTA. HE STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES, EXCEPT THE MARXISTS, WHO BRING A POISONOUS INFLUENCE WITH THEM.

7. TURNING TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PINOCHET BLAMED THE MARXISTS FOR TAKING CHILE OUT OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. HE DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.
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